

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
26 October 1973

INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

MIDDLE EAST

NSA and DIA
Reviews Completed

Situation Report Number 83
(as of 1130 EDT)

MORI/CDF
C02826144

THE MILITARY SITUATION

GENERAL

(All times cited in military paragraphs are
Cairo/Tel Aviv time, unless otherwise specified.)

1. Fighting continued through the morning in
the vicinity of Suez City. The remainder of the
Egyptian front and all of the Syrian front appear
to be quiet.

2. Tel Aviv claimed that Egyptian forces on
the east bank launched an attack north of Suez City
this morning and attempted to bridge the canal in

and claims that the Israelis violated the cease-fire
to improve their position.

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[REDACTED]

4. No significant activity involving Soviet forces has been noted. The naval group that had concentrated off the Egyptian coast has dispersed.

EGYPTIAN FRONT

5. Ground and heavy air action continued through the morning immediately north of Suez City. There are no reports of fighting elsewhere on the Egyptian front. Radio Tel Aviv reported that Egyptian tank and artillery units launched an attack and attempted to construct a bridge across the canal north of Suez City this morning. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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6. Press reports of the fighting from Cairo and Tel Aviv are contradictory. Tel Aviv claims the Egyptian Third Army launched the attack in order to return to the west bank while Cairo claimed there was no offensive action by Egyptian troops.

7. US attaches received a tour of parts of the east bank southern sector by helicopter this morning. According to the attaches, in the areas they observed, the situation appeared to have been accurately reflected in previous Israeli briefings. They reported that Egyptian Third Army positions extend as far as nine miles east of the canal in the southern sector, but narrow to about three and

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[REDACTED]

one-half miles near the central section of the Great Bitter Lake. A senior Israeli military officer reported that Egyptian forces also control a four and one-half mile stretch of the east gulf coast south from Suez City.

8. According to the attaches, the Egyptian units are well dug in under camouflage, but opposing Israeli forces have not dug in and appear to be mobile and flexible. Smoke columns seen at the southwest bank of the Great Bitter Lake were caused by Egyptian shelling of Kabrit airfield, according to an Israeli military officer. The attaches confirmed that the Israelis were resupplying their west bank force today.

SYRIAN FRONT

9. The Syrian front was quiet this morning and both sides appeared to be observing the cease-fire. Israeli aircraft flew what appeared to be defensive patrols over Israeli-occupied territory and into southern Lebanon during the morning; as of early afternoon as many as 50 more aerial tracks were being reported over the area.

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11. The Lebanese army [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] today reported that there was relatively little fedayeen cross-border activity on the nights of 24 and 25 October. This follows pledges by leaders of the major fedayeen groups to Lebanon that they would respect the cease-fire, at least for the present. In a reflection of the government's confidence that the border area may stay quiet, the Lebanese army is now patrolling in southern Lebanon.

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BREZHNEV SPEECH

21. Soviet party chief Brezhnev admitted today that the USSR has sent representatives to the Middle East to observe the implementation of the cease-fire.

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Speaking before the World Peace Congress in Moscow, Brezhnev said he hoped the US would also send observers. Brezhnev noted the UN Security Council's decision to create a UN emergency force to police the military regions, but he did not mention, in the text so far available, that permanent members of the Security Council would not contribute to this force. He labeled the decision a "useful one" and hoped it would help normalize the situation. According to one wire service, Brezhnev devoted 40 minutes of his speech to the Middle East. The US is not criticized directly in the early portions received, but China is accused of blackening the reputation of the Soviet Union with the Arab countries.

COMMENTARY FROM SOVIET DIPLOMATS

22. A Soviet [redacted] told a US diplomat in Beirut last night that an early Israeli withdrawal from Egyptian territory seized after the 22 October cease-fire was of vital importance to Sadat's position and also to the future of Soviet relations in the Arab world. He also calimed that fedayeen leader Arafat has informed the Soviets that he intends to abide by the cease-fire and that the Iraqi leaders are expected to softpedal their opposition to the truce.

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23. A Soviet diplomat in New Delhi informed a [redacted] Soviet troops may be sent to the Middle East because the UN could not act with sufficient speed to enforce the cease-fire. He admitted that the arrival of Soviet troops in the Middle East was inconsistent with detente, but pointed out that the US had sent troops to Lebanon in 1958 and settled the problem.

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ISRAEL-UN

24. The Israeli government has so far remained silent on the UN Security Council decision to send an

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[REDACTED]

international peacekeeping force to police the cease-fire. According to press reports from Tel Aviv, the cabinet will meet later today to discuss the resolution.

FEDAYEEN-SYRIA

25. Palestine Liberation Organization chief Yasir Arafat today arrived in Damascus for talks with Syrian officials, according to Middle East press reports. Arafat was last in Damascus on 23 October when he unsuccessfully tried to persuade President Asad not to accept the cease-fire. His current trip is undoubtedly designed to minimize the damage to fedayeen-Syrian relations that has resulted from fedayeen criticism of the cease-fire and to plead for continued Syrian support for the fedayeen.

LATE ITEMS

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ISRAELI TANKER

27. An Egyptian military spokesman said that the tanker bound for Israel which had been damaged today at the entrance to the Gulf of Suez had struck a mine. Tel Aviv had claimed that the tanker had been attacked by "enemy forces," but

[REDACTED]

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CAPTURED SA-6 BATTERIES

28. According to the Reuters wire service, reliable Israeli sources claim to have captured SA-6 batteries intact, including their radar and control systems. The Israeli attache in Washington had previously informed US officers that a dud SA-6 missile had been captured. Reuters also reported that yesterday foreign correspondents had been shown SA-3 missile batteries which also had been captured intact.

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